

Control of Displaced Civilians

A How-To Guide for Infantry Unit Leaders

COLONEL KENNETH H. PRITCHARD

Combat has always affected civilians in areas of operation, from front lines to rear areas. Controlling civilians on the battlefield can be a major problem for infantry units, because they are often the first to face the issue of unplanned population movements. And sometimes they face it alone. Infantry leaders must know what to do and how to do it. I offer here some general guidance and proven processes and procedures for controlling civilians at brigade level and below, in war and in military operations other than war.

Total war will greatly disrupt the lives of civilians, but even small-scale combat may affect local populations. The nature, frequency, intensity, and duration of the effects vary with the interaction of complex factors. It is not simply the point on the spectrum of conflict that matters, and—unlike in some Army and joint force command and staff training exercises at corps and echelons above corps—panicked civilians rarely wait for the post-hostilities phase of an operation. Similarly, an infantry unit that lands, occupies, or advances in the center of a sector may encounter no civilians on the battlefield, while sister units on its flanks could find themselves blocked by them. This was true in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and to a lesser degree, in *Desert Storm* and in Afghanistan. We have seen it recently in Europe, Asia, and Africa, but no region, ally, coalition partner, or U.S. military service is immune. The accidental and deliberate effects of future conflicts may be worse, however, in unstable states in the developing world where people are moving to overcrowded cities through unprecedented migration within and between states. Intelligence agencies, think tanks, and other sources predict increasing discontent and instability throughout the developing world in the years ahead, with greatest potential for combat and peace operations in and around large cities and other built up areas.

One of the more purposeful strategies now employed by state and non-state belligerents is the use of massed civilians—indirectly by information or directly by combat opera-

tions—to disrupt the military operations of their foes, peace enforcers, and relief agencies. A moderate to heavy flow of civilians can wreak havoc on operations if commanders are unprepared; even a small trickle can be disruptive at key times and places. Mass waves of noncombatants into the battle space—including front lines, forward logistics bases, and rearward staging areas in cities and other terrain—can stop a low-tech war for any high-tech superpower that is not prepared by doctrine, training, and planning to anticipate and quickly handle them the right way.

It is at the division level that a staff typically plans, assigns, and coordinates the tactical control and care of civilians (see Appendix B, *Dislocated Civilian Planning*, Field Manual (FM) 41-10, *Civil Affairs*, 2000), but it is the infantry units at and below brigade that must routinely do most of the work early in an operation. This is as true along front lines as it is in the brigade support area. As the logistics footprint hardens and deepens, the division support command's size, supplies, and services tend to attract displaced civilians, but this rarely relieves infantry platoons and squads of their burden; indeed, some infantry units may be part of a special task force designated to control civilians in key areas. Moreover, infantry units on the move rarely have the luxury of fully relying on military police (MP), civil affairs (CA), or the host nation, to control civilians. These assets are often too thin or too late. Therefore, infantry officers and non-commissioned officers must be trained to select and apply the best tactics, techniques, and procedures to control civilians, legally and effectively, across the spectrum of military operations. FM 19-15, *Civil Disturbances*, is very useful. Recent newsletters and other publications on peace operations by the Center for Army Lessons Learned are helpful, but more help is needed. FM 3-05.401, *Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, may help, but it is not scheduled to be published until August 2002.

In the meantime, this paper describes measures that were

successfully applied in battle center training program (BCTP) and Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) exercises (82d Airborne Division, 1990-2000), as well as *Desert Storm* in Iraq (3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, 1991), *Restore Hope* in Somalia (elements of Joint Task Force Somalia, 1993-94, including advice and assistance to our coalition partners), combat planning (the planned invasion of Haiti, 1994), and *Uphold Democracy* (elements of the 10th Mountain Division, 1994-95) in Haiti.

First and foremost, leaders should prevent or minimize the dislocation of civilians unless there is a contrary policy or operational objective, such as evacuating civilians because a chemical attack is feared, or because the host nation's policy is to move them to the rear for safety *and* the United States has decided to help. (U.S. forces may be in hostile territory or otherwise lack an "invitation." In such cases, there is no host nation to rely on.)

Preventing or minimizing the dislocation of civilians in hostile or contested territory is more problematic for U.S. forces. When temporarily or permanently displaced civilians (DCs) appear in the area, it is best to bypass or ignore them if doing so makes the execution of immediate operations easier without compromising follow-on operations. Mechanized units on the move will want to try this approach first—unless, for example, the trains are to be established near the civilians. Light infantry has a tougher time bypassing or ignoring masses of civilians, if only because they can walk or drive as fast as or faster than the troops, but it should be done if possible. A general exception to the standard policy of bypassing and ignoring DCs arises when there is a need to process them for intelligence information, noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) eligibility, and so forth.

If actual control is a must, there are three basic approaches—*blocking*, *clearing*, and *collecting*—and each has its pros and cons. In tactical operations below division level, leaders are likely to use all three techniques.

Blocking. Blocking uses roadblocks, which may be supported by checkpoints (see FM 3-19.4, [MP], *Military Police Battlefield Circulation Control, Area Security, and Enemy Prisoner of War Operations*) to prevent DCs from flowing onto key roads or areas and otherwise interfering with operations. The first priority, always, is to block the DCs. The second priority, usually a much harder task, is to persuade them to quit the area and return to their homes or a temporary holding area.

Planning considerations include the following:

- Availability of host nation assets to support operations.
- The likely timing, direction, rate, and flow of DCs, so as to position blocking forces where and when they will be most needed.
- Terrain that channels the DCs.
- The ability to reinforce a roadblock under pressure.
- The flexibility to disengage on order.

Blocking may be hasty or deliberate. In hasty blocking, the blockers do not search civilians or their means of transport. But the blocking force, friendly troops passing by, and any

MEASURES TO CONTROL CIVILIANS			
CONTROL MEASURE	EFFECTIVENESS OF MEASURE	SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS	PERSONNEL RESOURCE INTENSITY
Blocking	Medium – High	Conductive Terrain	Low – Medium
Clearing	Low – Medium	Dedicated Vehicle(s)	Low – Medium
Collecting	Low – High	Special Training	High – Very High

innocent civilians at the roadblock may be vulnerable in case of a terrorist attack. In deliberate blocking, the force uses well-placed barriers to keep civilians and their vehicles at a distance. Loudspeakers with prerecorded messages, such non-lethal weapons as pepper spray, mass dispersion devices, and other equipment and techniques discussed in FM 19-15 are also used to keep crowds at bay. This enhances the safety and security of all.

Clearing. Clearing by mounted troops sweeps DCs from roads—such as main and alternate supply routes and the trains areas—to get them out or keep them from impeding movement, interfering with operations, or concealing a terrorist threat—25 to 50 feet from a roadway may be enough for dismounted civilians, but civilian vehicles should be kept at least 50 meters away from troops. The first priority is to cause the DCs to move in the general direction or to the exact location you want them to go. A larger challenge is to make them continue to comply with instructions when the clearing team is not right behind them.

Clearing is likely to be ineffective if it is not well planned and integrated with other control techniques. Therefore, clearing is usually a part of a larger DC control plan designed to push DCs in specified directions away from military units, routes, and operations. Clearing is an economy-of-force operation, because a clearing team is small compared to a blocking or collecting team.

Some of the planning considerations for clearing are:

- The ability to continually sweep or chase DCs.
- Teaming with MPs, host nation forces, and PSYOPs personnel, whenever possible, to enhance each others' missions.
- The ability to respond in greater force when initial efforts are ineffective.

There are two main drawbacks to clearing:

- Control is fleeting, and sweeps must be repeated as long as the road or area is being used by friendly forces and civilians are close enough to be a problem.
- Mounted civilians present a continuing security concern for friendly forces, such as terrorism by car bomb, because they can quickly breach any safe distance that is created.

All clearing is hasty by nature, but deliberate planning may ensure that loudspeakers with prerecorded messages and mass dispersal devices are available for use on the recalcitrant.

Collecting. Collecting results in hands-on control of 100 or more DCs at a time at a displaced civilian collection point (DCCP) (Figure 2) or other holding area to keep them from interfering with operations, or to foster their care and processing. FM 41-10 says that collecting "is the primary control measure for gaining initial control over DCs." But collecting is not always efficient or otherwise appropriate for infantry. It takes considerable forethought, training, and manpower to

THREE MAIN MESSAGES

STANDARD ROADBLOCK RECORDING:

1. This is a roadblock.
2. For your safety, you will not be allowed to pass this point.
3. Return to your homes.

STANDARD CLEARING RECORDING:

1. Stay off the road. OR Get out of this area.
2. If you do not comply you will be arrested.
3. Return to your homes.

STANDARD CIV RECORDING:

1. This is a civilian collection point.
2. You will not be harmed.
3. Everyone will be searched. Vehicles will be searched and parked. Some belongings may be taken from you temporarily for everyone's safety.
4. Water and emergency medical care will be provided to you after you have been searched.
5. If we take any of your belongings, you will receive a receipt. If any of your belongings for which you have a receipt are not returned to you, you will be compensated for them.

TEN MAGIC WORDS

- | | |
|-------------|-----------|
| 1. Go | 6. Stand |
| 2. Stop | 7. Sit |
| 3. Hands up | 8. Yes |
| 4. Right | 9. No |
| 5. Left | 10. Water |

collect DCs and entice them to stay at a collection point without the disincentive of hot combat down the road. Civilians are there voluntarily unless host nation forces are available to detain them. Continuing to hold them, thus preventing operational interference until the time of disposition, is a particularly challenging task.

Disposition includes their release from or closure of the DCCP because units or operations have moved on, and moving them to a displaced civilian assembly area (DCAA)—a logistical step up from a DCCP. There is no book on how to persuade people to stay at a DCAA, but good psychological operations and civil-military support can help. Some helpful means include mass media broadcasts, loudspeakers with prerecorded messages, signs (with culturally correct graphics), and leaflets.

Shown in the accompanying box are, main messages for use in tactically controlling civilians. These messages can be prerecorded for loudspeakers, if possible, but they should also be printed in English and the predominant language of the AO on 3x5 cards that can be used to “point and talk” by number. A well-prepared DCAA will display the same words in the same order on a large sign. Also shown are ten magic words or phrases that every soldier should be able to say in the dominant language. “Put down your weapon” and other phrases are also important, of course, but “hands up” is a simpler way to express surrender and control, and related concepts.

Division usually selects or approves the routes for the movement of DCs, approves collection points identified by brigades, tying them into tentative civilian assembly areas, and plans for personnel and logistics to support DCs at operational sites beyond the capabilities of brigades. A DCAA

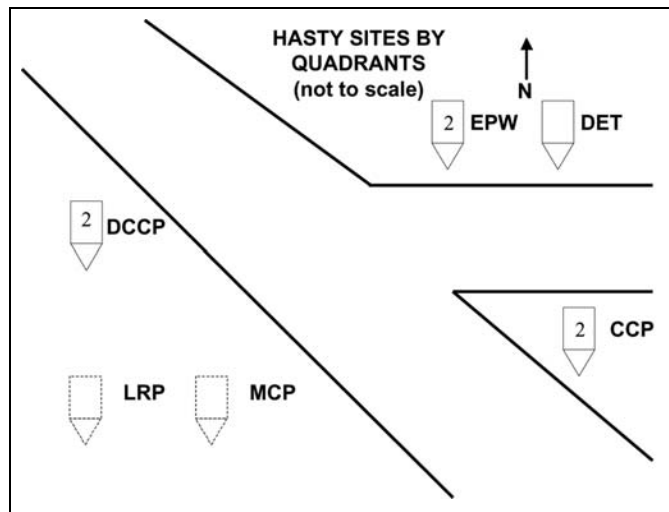


Figure 1

is a short term holding area—a few hours to three or four days. A displaced civilian assembly area, which is typically to the rear of DCCPs, may host DCs for a week or longer. Although an assembly area may evolve into a DC camp, typically, such a camp is very carefully planned as a mid- to long-term facility at corps or echelons above corps, and civilian assembly areas feed people into it.

Infantry units are often designated to operate or support the operation of a DCAA. In some cases, the job falls upon them by flow of action. Infantry leaders at brigade and below can help prepare for this job by standardizing and combining plans and tasks for dealing with non-combatants. In the attack, the quadrant method (Figure 1) is one way to designate hasty sites for controlling noncombatants and other groups. By this method, each quadrant of a crossroads may be designated for a likely group or purpose—such as Northwest for a hasty DCCP, Northeast for a hasty enemy prisoner of war (EPW) and/or a detainee (DET) site, Southeast for a hasty casualty collection point (CCP), and Southwest as a multi-purpose quadrant for maintenance, supplies, and other purposes, keeping the groups 50 to 100 meters from the roads. This keeps the groups sufficiently separated. It improves the safety and security of each group, minimizes manpower requirements, and reduces the potential for terrorism by keeping people a reasonable distance from passing troops. Prior training and rudimentary supplies, including water cans or bottles and large quantities of chemical lights, facilitate the day and night operation of a hasty DCAA.

Once a hasty DCCP becomes operational, transformation into a deliberate DCAA may begin, as appropriate. There are five key tasks at a deliberate DCCP:

- Local security.
- Physical security within the area, to include vehicle search and DC search.
- DC processing and property control.
- Services.
- Resolution or disposition, such as the move-out phase.

The ability to accomplish all five of these tasks in the location of a hasty DCCP may be problematic and require the controlled movement of the facility. This requires controlled

movement of civilians—a task to be avoided, if possible—because effective movement requires more manpower than staying put, and the noise and lights of the DCs location may compromise security, and there may be danger areas to cross. Accordingly, the officer or NCO in charge of the DCCP may need to undertake the five tasks selectively. Even if an infantry unit is able to hand off a hasty DCCP to a support unit just a few hours after it becomes operational, knowledge of the layout and operation of a deliberate DCCP is valuable.

Operation of a DCCP

Local Security.

- Locate the DCCP so that DCs will not suffer any greater exposure to the effects of combat than they would without the DCCP.

- Establish local security to protect the persons operating the DCCP, the occupants, and friendly troops adjacent to it or passing by.

- Post guards at the entrance and exit of the DCCP. Give them special orders, as required.

Physical security and operations within the DCCP:

Step 1, Dismount point/vehicle search. Ensure that all private autos, public conveyances, and the like (including livestock and carts) are parked outside or on the fringes of the facility in the vehicle search area until they have been searched; require all passengers to dismount.

- Direct passengers to the DC search area.

- Make sure the driver remains with the vehicle until it is searched. If you have an undercarriage observation device, use it. When the search is over, the driver and the searchers together move the vehicle or livestock cart to the vehicle hold area in accordance with the model DCCP layout (Figure 3). Many vehicles will contain household goods, suitcases, and other items. Search them for bombs and weapons if the vehicle holding area is within 50 meters of the people holding area. Although searching for contraband is not standard procedure, it may be mandatory under the OPORD or special orders given to you. Inform the driver that once the vehicle is searched, it will be secure, but placed off limits so that no DC will be allowed to retrieve any of the items from the vehicle. Use an Explanation

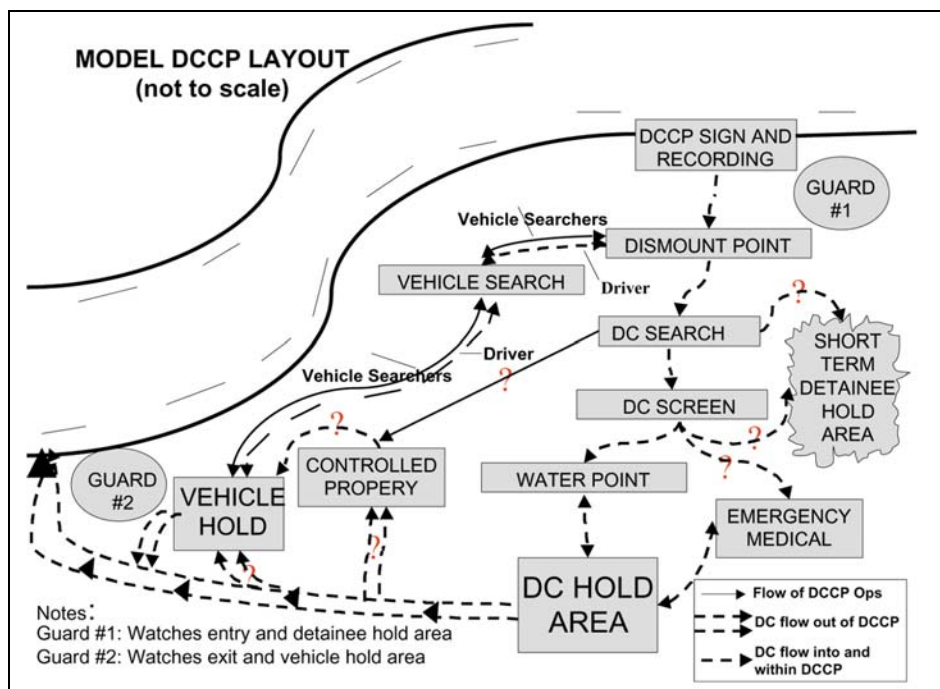


Figure 2. . Sample DC Overlay (From FM 41-10)

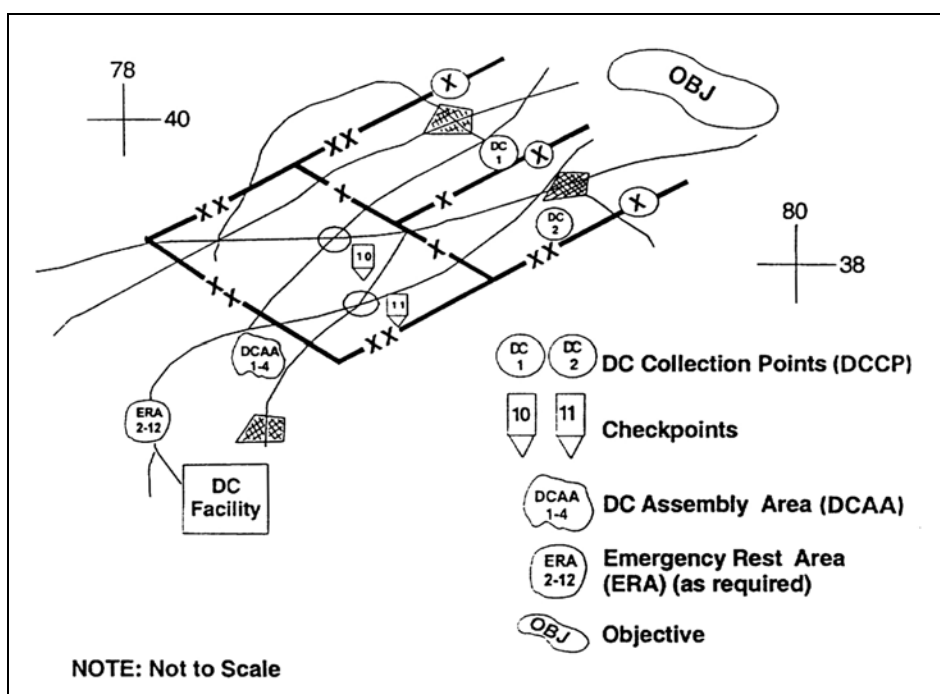


Figure 3

Card, sentence 3, to point-to-communicate, as necessary. Treat livestock as vehicles. Treat pets as livestock—if this does not create more problems than it avoids. If available, affix a Field Property Control Card to the vehicle or animal by using the back of the card to denote the driver/owner as best you can. Give a copy to the driver. Point to sentence 3 on the Explanation Card, as necessary. (Brigades may develop a simple Field Property Control Card that contains lines for the DCCP number, the date, the seized item number, the seized item description, and a signature lock for the DCCP OIC or

ORAL REHYDRATION THERAPY (ORT), WHAT EVERY SOLDIER SHOULD KNOW

Death from dehydration (extreme loss of fluids), especially of infants, the elderly and the sick or injured, is a constant threat in war and military operations other than war. People tend to experience extreme loss of fluids from diarrhea, bleeding, and hot weather. You must be aware of this threat and always prepared to respond to it effectively, especially when operating a displaced civilian collection point, to help carry out the legal and moral responsibilities of the commander.

Be especially aware of:

- Infants (who are burned or bleeding; whose skin has lost its elasticity; who do not urinate or have dark colored urine as opposed to clear urine).
- Nursing mothers
- Very thin people, with sallow eyes
- Persons who are heavily bandaged
- Persons on litters

World Health Organization ORT formula:

- 1 quart water
- 3.5 grams of sodium chloride (table salt)
- 2.5 grams of sodium bicarbonate (Arm & Hammer)
- 1.5 grams of potassium chloride (Lite Salt)
- 20 grams of sugar.

U.S. military field expedients for ORT:

- MRE salt pack = 4 grams of table salt
- MRE beverage base pack = 32 grams of sugar
- MRE cocoa pack = 1.4 grams of potassium

Water and salt alone are okay in a pinch. In extreme cases, do not "load up" the patient with fluids, especially if the water is cold; this may cause vomiting and the loss of even more fluid. Give small amounts of room temperature water frequently.

Babies will want to suck (not drink) the formula. Use ice chips or a wet, porous rag.

A dehydrated person's blood pressure is low. Get the patient into the shade, with feet up, if possible.

Pedia-Lite is a brand name ready-mix ORT formula for infants.

NCOIC.) In a pinch, however, any handwritten receipt that is clear, complete, and concise will do. Army forms, such as DA Form 3161 (Request for Issue or Turn-In), may also be used.

- A searcher then escorts the driver to the DC search area.

Step 2, DC search. Search DCs and their belongings for items that are prohibited.

- Vary your search methods. Use a quick pat-down for some people, and do a more invasive search of others. If you have a hand-held metal detector, use it to expedite the searches. Tag any property taken under your control and give a copy to the owner. Use a Field Property Control Card. Use an Explanation Card, as necessary.

- Always use trained personnel to perform searches. If possible, use females to search females, infants, and children. If a female searcher is not at the DCCP but is close enough to get there in a reasonable time, defer these searches until she arrives; set the people aside until then so that they are not a potential danger to others. If a female searcher cannot be ob-

tained, have a *trained* male searcher do the search, using the back of the hand technique, if its use is not contrary to orders and if special security concerns require a search.

- Always use a searcher (unarmed) and an over-watcher (armed). They must be trained in these skills and know how to work together.

Step 3, DC processing, to include DC screen and property control. This part of operating a deliberate DCCP may be deferred for a while, but a full waiver is not advisable, as a general practice. DC processing consists of two stages. All persons go through stage one. Stage two may be deferred or delayed, reserved for certain people, or skipped entirely.

- Stage 1 processing. This is the quick screen to identify EPWs and others (civilian internees and detainees) who must be segregated immediately from everyone else. You may be able to do this without a translator. Beware of irregulars and infiltrators trying to pass as civilians. Upon discovery, all EPWs, civilian internees, and detainees are placed in the short-term detainee holding area. Normally, you may detain anyone who is causing a problem at the DCCP. Although civilian internees and detainees should be further segregated from EPWs, you will rarely have the time or the resources to do this.

Consistent with orders, take control of all items that may cause harm to your team, to any friendly forces passing the DCCP, or to the occupants of the DCCP—or items that non-combatants are not to have according to U.S. or host nation policy.

- Stage 2 processing. This stage is to help categorize DCs more specifically (for example, "Is anyone a U.S. citizen?"), to reunite families within the DCCP, to identify persons of influence, and to obtain information (from equipment, weapons, papers, and discussions) that may have intelligence value. Do this when you have the time and resources, but do not put a high priority on it. A translator is almost always required.

Step 4 (Services) Services at a DCCP may range from immediate care (attention to life-threatening conditions) to ancillary care (including food), depending on need and resources. Only water and immediate medical care are mandatory, to the extent they are emergency services provided consistent with the legal and moral obligations of the commander. Do not provide service to a DC until after he/she has undergone the quick screen stage of processing, except for emergency care needed to prevent loss of life (*death imminent*).

- First, treat life-threatening emergencies, such as giving first aid for traumatic injuries and oral rehydration therapy (ORT) for dehydrated infants.

- Second, provide water as a preventive measure if you have a supply adequate for this purpose.

- Third, allow occupants to relieve themselves. Provide one latrine for men and one for women, and basic equipment (such as shovels and latrine screen expedients) to permit and encourage the occupants themselves to prepare rudimentary sanitation facilities (slit trenches). Supervise.

- Fourth, give out food only to occupants who have been at the DCCP 24 hours or more. Food handed out more generously can become a "pull factor." Also be aware that certain MRE items may be forbidden or inappropriate by religion or

culture and/or too rich for malnourished people and cause immediate sickness. (Yellow-packaged international humanitarian rations are safe.)

- Fifth, provide other services consistent with the commander's legal, moral, and mission-specific obligations and requirements.

Step 5, Disposition or Resolution. Once a DCCP is operational, there are four possible outcomes for the operators:

- Retain control of the DCCP, recognizing that moral obligations to the civilians there will increase with time.
- Close down the DCCP by releasing the DCs from it, if warranted by the tactical situation and other factors.
- Arrange for the movement of the DCs to another holding area, such as a civilian assembly area, or...
- Hand off DCCP operations to other operators (such as a support unit or the host nation)—this is the most likely outcome for infantry units on the move.

Handing off a DCCP. As your unit moves out of an area, you must be prepared to hand off any DCCP in operation to the follow-on forces. Ideally, these forces will include trained CA operators, but they may not. In either case, you must be prepared to give the follow-on forces a full briefing on your operation of the DCCP.

Briefing. Cover the following:

- EPWs.
- U.S. allied and coalition soldiers.
- Civilians who are interned or detained.
- Civilians who are U.S. citizens and/or contractors.
- Civilians who may be useful as centers of influence.
- The tactical situation and intelligence (or unprocessed information) as they concern real or potential threats to the DCCP.
- Medical emergencies.
- Controlled property, any special, additional information peculiar to the DCCP. The officer or NCO in charge of the facility must give the briefing personally and keep notes for his own records—the date-time group of the hand off, the name/rank/position of the person to whom the hand off was made, and a summary of the information provided.

Controlled property. Depending on the category of property, you may do one of the following:

- Retain control of it.
- Return it to the person(s) from whom it was taken.
- Do a combination of the previous two, or hand the prop-

erty over to other forces or agencies, usually the follow-on forces assuming responsibility for the DCCP. For simplicity, you will usually want to make this an all-or-nothing proposition; that is, either transfer all controlled property to follow-on forces, or retain all of it. (Transfer of property is preferred if your intention all along has been to return the property to the DCs when they left the DCCP; that is, if the property was controlled solely or mainly to ensure security within the facility.)

Transferring control. To transfer control of this property, you must do the following:

- Fill out a property control register, listing all the items controlled.
- Have an official of the follow-on forces sign for the items and a copy of the register itself by using DA Form 3161 (Request for Issue or Turn-In).

Retaining control. If you take the property with you (as you must do if no one will sign for it and you do not want to return it), you may have to give an official receipt (such as DA Form 3161) and explain to the owners the U.S. Army's intention to return the property at a later time and their rights for compensation if it is not returned. This reiteration of rights (sentence 5 of the Explanation Card) is intended to reassure the owners and may be needed to ensure a smooth hand-off.

In light of the fact that the primary mission of U.S. forces will be the conduct of combat and security operations, it is obvious that credible, trusted host nation forces be used to the greatest extent possible in controlling and safeguarding their civilians displaced by the currents of war.

This paper has provided general guidance and specific information for controlling civilians on the battlefield. Although some of the information may seem too detailed for infantry leaders, small unit leaders are discovering that practice of the basics, not simply awareness, is a modern military necessity. If we accept and prepare for the eventuality of dealing with population movements in the area of operations, we can better train our soldiers to deal effectively with one of the greatest challenges that can confront a combat leader.

Colonel Kenneth H. Pritchard is an operations research analyst, Policy and Strategy Division, U.S. Special Operations Command, specializing in civil-military issues. He has served in a variety of command and staff positions in the active Army, the Maryland Army National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve, including commander, 45th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), which supports the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division worldwide.
